

17th March, 2010

Dear Rep. Giuliano,

I am writing in support of Proposed Bill 5504, which seeks to prevent cell towers from being constructed near schools. This bill is an important first step, but I do not believe it goes far enough. Earlier this month, the Town of Greenwich voted to pass a 1500-foot school buffer zone, and other Connecticut towns may be expected to follow suit.

I urge you and your colleagues to increase the proposed buffer to 1500 feet, or if the 750-foot restriction is indeed passed, that it be clarified that the buffer shall be from any school grounds, such as adjoining playgrounds, ball fields, etc., and not merely from the school building itself. Many schools have adjacent property which is used for recreational purposes. This too should be within the protected zone.

The potential for harm from proximity to cell tower microwaves has yet to be fully studied, hence it is best to err on the side of caution, to protect the developing minds and bodies of our schoolchildren.

A National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences panel designated power frequency electromagnetic fields (ELF/EMF) as "possible human carcinogens." This "potential carcinogen" designation was further supported by a World Health Organization monograph in 2002.

The Firefighters' Union has also issued a strong statement against erecting cell towers on Fire Department property, citing health hazards, and providing an exhaustive list of studies and areas of concern, including higher incidences of cancer, changes in sleep patterns, decreased memory and attention span, and other metabolic changes.
<http://iaff.org/hs/facts/CellTowerFinal.asp>.

Cell towers should be sited in industrial zones or near highways. Our schools must be preserved as safe havens for our children. Here in Old Lyme, there have been two separate proposals for towers near our Elementary School. One was defeated at Town Meeting; the other is out of our hands, to be determined by the CT Siting Council. If this can occur in a Town such as Old Lyme, which prides itself on conservation and historic heritage, surely it can happen anywhere. I hope the Siting Council will heed the voice of growing opposition to siting towers near schools or recreational areas, and I urge the legislature to take further steps to protect Connecticut's youngest and most vulnerable citizens from this potential health hazard.

Sincerely,
Michaelle Pearson
Old Lyme, CT

